

Opinion: Predicting the news of 2018

By Kathryn Reed

Just because the headlines of 2017 are in the past does not mean the issues are gone.

#MeToo or as *Time* magazine called the movement – The Silence Breakers in naming them the person of the year – is bound to be a significant carryover into 2018.

While the high profile cases of the upper echelon garner the bulk of the headlines, the magazine pointed out sexual abuse is at all levels. For hotel workers, some are treated like an amenity – a toy of sorts – for high paying clients. How often has this happened in Lake Tahoe?

Some of the women whose names are part of these stories are powerful in their own right. And, yet, look how long it took them to stand up for themselves and all women? If they were afraid, imagine how terrifying it is for the “average” woman to come forward.

The truth is powerful. It can also be scary. And it always has consequences.

At the last South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting one of the electeds said how he was surprised to learn that *unwanted* hugs are a form of harassment. Incredulously, one of his colleagues pointed out that it was *unwanted*. He said he is a hugger, as though his desire to hug someone is more important than the recipient's. He asked how he was supposed to know the person didn't want a hug. His colleague said just don't hug.

Really, that is the bottom line. Just don't do *it*. Whatever *it* is.

It's hard to find a woman who can't use the MeToo hashtag. That's so incredibly sad. We all have a story, some horrifying and life altering, others just an annoyance like a cat call.

Another headline apt to carry over into this new year is the growing chasm between the haves and have nots. The divide in the Lake Tahoe Basin is growing every day. The economy is great – for some. It is tanking for others. Wages are not keeping up with the cost of living. Every basic bill is going up – food, gas, utilities (garbage, electric, water, phone). Rents are going up, as well as insurance (medical, homeowners, business), and of course taxes. It doesn't end.

More people on the edge are going to fall off. Then what?

People want things for cheap or free. They don't want to pay fair market. My prediction is that some of the things we take for granted that are free today will not exist or will be completely different a year from today, maybe even *Lake Tahoe News*. Businesses can't keep giving things away without compensation. Life is an evolution – personally and professionally.

Housing will continue to be in the news. It will be in the form of affordable housing, homelessness, and vacation rentals. People want government to solve their problems, but are all of these issues really the job of government? That in itself is a discussion that is warranted because it will help lead to the answers. Compromise is going to be needed, and that is going to be hard for a lot of people. We all want to get our way, but sometimes doing things for the greater good is better. Selflessness is required, and that is always difficult.

As we forge a path in this new year, let's remember to do so with respect. Let's listen. Let's not talk over others. Let's not dismiss people because we disagree with them. Let's start figuring out what we want and then chip away at the hurdles to

accomplish those goals.

We have a strong, passionate, engaged group of residents, second homeowners and visitors who love Lake Tahoe. We are all stewards with a stake in the region's future. Let's find that common ground where in a year from now there are fewer people wondering how their bills will get paid, where their next meal will come from, if they will be assaulted.

Let's be better than the headlines.

Kathryn Reed is publisher of Lake Tahoe News.